

SCOTLAND'S STORY

R12

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**James, the Scot
who wanted to be
God's Englishman**

**Mystery of the
Gowrie Conspiracy**

**Two crowns on
one head – that
was no Union**

**The real Robinson
Crusoe – from Fife**

**Pilot who flew off
into the darkness
of a Mull mystery**




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ATLANTIC
OCEAN

1566

Birth of Mary, Queen of Scots' son, Charles James. Eight months later he is crowned as James VI.



1581

Earl of Morton, longest serving regent in James's minority, executed.



1582

George Buchanan, King's tutor and renowned scholar, dies.



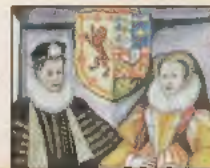
1585

Personal rule of James VI commences.



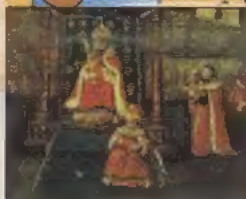
1589

Marriage of James VI to Anne of Denmark.



1603

Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England.



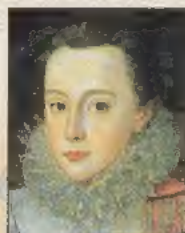
1600

The Gowrie Conspiracy, in which James claims he was kidnapped and threatened with death.



1625

James VI dies and is succeeded by his son, Charles I.



1617

James VI pays his first and only visit to Scotland after taking over the English throne.



In Part 22:
Church radicals sign contract with God

PART OF
IRELAND

North
Channel

PART OF
ENGLAND



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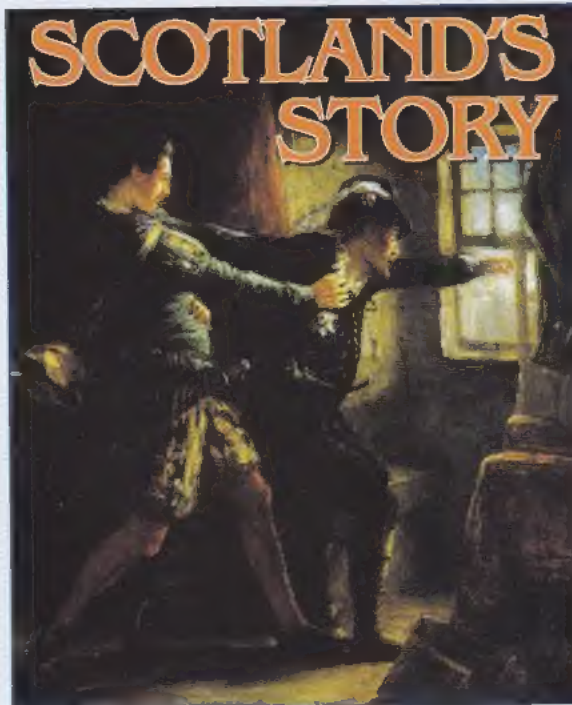
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COVER:
A dramatic painting by John MacLaren Barclay shows James VI trying to evade his assailants during the so-called Gowrie Conspiracy.

The first rule of the Modern Age

King James VI reigned for 59 years. And, like his mother before him, his personality had a big impact on the affairs of the nation.

As with Mary, James has also provoked strong reactions among those who have studied him. But he, too, was a genuinely complex character.

He is variously described – without contradiction – as a yobbish youth and a scholar; a sportsman and a boozier; as hard yet fey; a just ruler and a tyrant; and a 'wise fool'.

His was the first rule of the modern age, during which time the genesis of a recognisably modern government can be seen.

Under James, the state began to extend its tentacles into the local administration of justice, the Church – and perhaps even more significantly – regular taxation.

He became a fanatic of self-propaganda, which he used to garner support for his policies. He called himself the 'universal king', above church, above politics, above everything.

James' ideal society required the suppression or extirpation of any creed or culture that didn't fit his

mould. In Scotland that was a mixed bag of Gaels, Catholics and radical Presbyterians.

For James, if something pleased him, then it ought to please his people – and convincing the one-time 'cradle king' otherwise was often impossible.

To talk mainly of 'British' – rather than Scottish or English – history before the Union of the Crowns in 1603 is not very meaningful.

But even after that event, use of the term is somewhat premature.

King James VI was devoted to the concept of a single unified 'British' nation, but very few shared his enthusiasm.

The history of the following century and a half shows just how tenaciously the Scots clung to their distinct national identity in its various forms.

The practical upshot of the Union of 1603, however – effective loss of Scotland's independent monarchy – meant that the nation stood to lose further native control over its political, economic and social affairs.

He dreamt of being 'God's Englishman'



■ **Maturing monarch:** James painted in his mid-forties by De Critz. He could develop a blind eye when situations proved awkward.

The Scottish-born son of Mary, Queen of Scots was a man of many parts – poet, scholar, sportsman and dysfunctional tyrant – even before he went south to rule his second kingdom

On July 29, 1567, the infant son of Mary, Queen of Scots was carried in ceremonial procession the short distance from Stirling Castle to the parish church of the Holy Rude. There he was subjected to a sermon from John Knox, drawn from the Book of Kings, and was crowned James VI, King of Scots.

It was probably the worst-attended coronation in Scottish history. He was being crowned by rebels. His mother had been forced to sign a deed of deposition five days before. The English ambassador waited outside, because Elizabeth I could not afford to be seen publicly condoning such an action.

In December, 1566, just eight months before, he had been baptised a Catholic prince in the Chapel Royal in the Castle. Now he was

transformed into a protestant 'cradle king' – as he later called himself. And in the process, his name was shortened from the Catholic-sounding Charles James to just James.

The boy-king spent the next 12 years in his schoolroom prison in Stirling Castle, where he was tutored by the brilliant scholar George Buchanan. Brought up on a diet of Greek before breakfast, he would later claim that he could understand Latin before he could read Scots. Buchanan was a hard taskmaster and his pupil, though formidably talented, had a deep streak of laziness.

His other surrogate parent, Lady Mar, was no less formidable. He never saw again his real mother, who spent the rest of her days imprisoned in England until her execution in 1587.

James's attitude towards Mary is the stuff of a classic psychologist's case study of a dysfunctional child.

James's formidable intellect was matched by a foul tongue and an adolescent's love of the hunt which never left him. By 1590 he had denuded the forests around Falkland Palace of deer.

He added to that a love of hard drinking. Bereft of affection, he later commissioned portraits of mother and child together in a relationship which existed only in his imagination. Yet his first action, when he heard of her execution, was to demand financial compensation from Elizabeth.

It was small wonder that James clung to his 37-year-old cousin, Esme Stewart, when he arrived in Scotland in 1579 – and wept inconsolably when he died.

At the age of almost 14, James was allowed to make his debut – in October, 1579. A formal entry into Edinburgh was staged and Holyroodhouse, which had been empty since Mary was deposed, was made habitable. Hounds, horses, hawks and billiard balls were bought. Stables were repaired, a tiltyard built and a 'dancing hous' fitted out. An English musician, ▶

■ The boy king: James, aged eight, was painted in this delicate pose by Arnold van Bronckhorst.



Making a late start in control of government, James took some time to get down to the hard work of kingship

► William Hudson, was paid a considerable £100 for his 'extraordinary pains' in trying to teach the awkward teenager to dance.

The scene was set for a glittering Renaissance court. The first half of the 1580s were the years of the 'Castalian Band', with the teenager enjoying being centre of attention.

The spin doctors were the court poets around him who hailed him as 'prince of poets' and 'Apollo, patron of the arts'. James's first legislation was his *Essays of a Prentise in the Divine Arte of Poesie*, which set down laws for the writing of poetry.

One of the most extraordinary features of this long reign was that, despite his formal entry into politics in 1579, James did not personally take control of government until 1585, by which time he was 19. This was a late start compared with previous Stewart kings and it seems to have taken him time to knuckle down to the hard work of kingship.

In the 1590s, he attended his privy council regularly, insisted on reading all documents put before him, cultivated an ethic of hard work, and regularly wrote apoplectic letters to government ministers who fell down on the job. But before that, he was almost casual about his duties, fond of slipping off to the hunt or whiling away his time with a close circle of hard-drinking cronies.

But James was aware, even then, about the need for presentation in politics. The long-delayed league with England was held off in 1586 to coincide with his birthday. In May, 1587, he staged a very public 'love feast' in Edinburgh's High Street.

After a long, acrimonious and increasingly drunken meeting at Holyroodhouse, he forced his feuding nobles to walk hand-in-hand the half-mile up to the Mercat Cross, near St Giles, where a second banquet was laid out in the street.

Toasts were made, glasses smashed, criminals let out of jail and the town gallows ritually burned, for



■ James Douglas, fourth Earl of Morton, who was the last Regent of Scotland during James VI's minority.

A TURMOIL OF REGENTS AS THE 'CRADLE KING' SLEPT

No fewer than four major figures covered for the minor monarch, but it was a risky job

The prospect of a minor succeeding to the throne matters little in the 21st century, but in the 16th it had major implications. When Mary was deposed in 1567, the key to status and power in Scotland became a baby king barely one year old.

Effective rule during the minority of James VI rested with a regent, appointed to handle the King's affairs until he came of age. In a minority which stumbled from one national crisis to the next, there were no fewer than four regencies.

The first of these, who was forced on the abdicating Queen Mary, was her half-brother, the Earl of Moray. A leading Reformation protestant, Moray was initially successful, defeating Mary at Langside in 1568. After that, his regency was bedevilled by opposition from Mary's supporters, particularly the Gordon and Hamilton families.

It was a member of the latter, Hamilton of Bothwell Haugh, who

assassinated Moray at Linlithgow in January, 1570.

Another Stewart – Matthew, fourth Earl of Lennox – eventually succeeded as Regent in July, largely on the recommendation of England's Queen Elizabeth. During his brief tenure the civil war between James VI's government and Mary's followers proceeded sporadically.

Lennox's main success was the capture of Dumbarton Castle in April, 1571, and the execution of one of his principal adversaries, John Hamilton, Archbishop of St Andrews. Lennox was mortally wounded in a skirmish with Marians – supporters of Mary – at Stirling Castle in September that year.

A survivor of the Marian attack on Stirling – John Erskine, Earl of Mar, who took shelter in his recently-constructed townhouse – became the next Regent by popular consent.

His main achievement before his death in 1572 was to reach an agreement over

the function of Bishops in the reformed Kirk. But Mar's regency was overshadowed by his successor, James Douglas, fourth Earl of Morton.

A dominant figure in all the preceding regencies, Morton kept a firm grip on the nobility, ran the Borders effectively, and resolutely adhered to the English alliance which helped rid the Marians from Edinburgh Castle. He was guilty of various malpractices in the Church, but did reform the collection of benefices.

He strongly resisted the challenge to royal authority from Andrew Melville and the second 'Book of Discipline'. But his position was undermined by opponents such as the royal favourite, Esme Stewart, and his colleague, James Stewart.

This pair, along with Morton's many other enemies, were responsible for his arrest in December, 1580, and ultimate execution in June, 1581.

There then followed a lengthy period of factional conflict during which Esme Stewart and later James Stewart were in the ascendancy.

James VI eventually began his personal rule in 1585.

in the new Scotland of James VI, with a government tough on violence and the causes of violence, they would not be needed.

This orgy of self-congratulation would now be called 'government by photo opportunity'. But this was the carefully-cultivated image of a 'universal king' – as James called himself – above faction.

The change in James's behaviour can be dated to about 1589. This was also the time when he abandoned poetry and turned to a new career in prose, writing about subjects ranging from kingship and theology to demonology and tobacco.

A new seriousness overtook him. By now he was 23 and had been nagged for years about the most important duty of a king – to find a wife and produce an heir. Here as elsewhere, James was a late starter.

Suitable protestant candidates were thin on the ground and James had a choice of just two, very different prospects. One was the

29-year-old Huguenot, Catherine of Navarre, a 'wise, staid woman', according to Chancellor Maitland. The other was Anne (or Anna) of Denmark, just 14. James locked himself away for a week to brood on his fate. He chose, to Maitland's disgust, the 'childe'.

Anne was not entirely the 'dumb blonde' that one historian has labelled her. She had firm views on most things and the relationship between her and James seems to have swung from stormy to loving and back again. They clashed furiously over two things above all else.

Anne quickly copied and outdid her husband's extravagant spending habits. It was a group of courtiers, the 'Octavians', who were first dispatched to put a curb on her extravagance. James invited them to look at his own finances in 1596. But cutting off his wife's credit was one thing, stopping his own was another. The Octavians were dismissed in less than a year. Anne also bitterly

resented his demands that their children be farmed out to different courtiers to help preserve a political balance at court. Brought up a Lutheran, she became a convert to Catholicism within a few years of the marriage. With separate households and residences, they were increasingly a couple living apart together.

The 1590s saw a phenomenal growth of the state. The Privy Council, the main organ of the King's government, was by then dealing with 30 times the amount of business it had in 1550. One after another, different groups of James's subjects – burgesses, Highlanders, Borderers – came under the scrutiny of his council.

To give just one example, when he was given the chance of collecting the rents of one of the growing number of black sheep in the royal family, Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, his administration went about it with clinical



■ Royal favourite: Esme Stewart.

efficiency. No fewer than 2,400 copies of the order transferring the Earl's rents to the Crown were made and an official was sent on a nine-month tour of the Orkneys to distribute them.

The ability to put money on the table became a benchmark for loyal subjects. Burgesses had larger and larger tax demands made of ▶



■ James locked himself away to brood on his fate, then chose Anne of Denmark – to start a ‘stormy’ marriage.

► them. By 1615 clan chiefs were expected to take the road from the Isles each year in June to deliver their rents to the King’s council in person.

But at the same time, James had a habit of developing a blind eye when awkward dilemmas presented themselves.

The Earl of Huntly – husband of his cousin Henrietta, daughter of Esme Stewart – was caught up in a Catholic rising, the so-called Brig o’

Dee affair, in 1589. He was threatened with a treason trial but set free four months later.

Huntly’s murder of the ‘bonnie’ Earl of Moray in 1592 almost provoked a civil war. But he escaped with another slap over the wrist, despite the fact that the dead man’s mother paraded a life-size portrait of Moray, complete with real-looking wounds, before the courts demanding justice.

In 1594, Huntly staged another

Catholic rising. This time, it seemed, was the third strike and he was forfeited. The job of administering his estates was handed to his brother-in-law.

King James’s peace was selective. And his reign is well known for the struggle between him and the Kirk.

It is often summed up in the story of Andrew Melville, leader of the awkward squad in the Kirk, bursting into a private meeting at Falkland in 1596 and tugging the King’s sleeve,



to lecture him that he was just ‘God’s sillie vassal’ (literally, his frail vessel).

The story is a caricature of reality. Melville was annoyed because he had become used to private meetings with the King and had been excluded from this one.

The clash between the two men has often been misunderstood. A king sure of his own godliness and a preacher convinced of his own righteousness were always liable to disagree, and by temperament James had always to win an argument.

But James was an out-and-out Calvinist and Melville enjoyed hanging about the court.

Although Melville’s conscience told him he had to boycott Anne’s coronation because of the ‘papist’ ceremony of anointing, he insisted on delivering in person the 200 Latin



■ Scottish nobles and Spanish grandees negotiate a peace treaty, one of James VI's many achievements.

TIMELINE

1566

Birth of Prince James. Eight months later he is crowned King James VI after his mother, Mary, is forced to abdicate in his favour.

1572

Earl of Morton becomes Regent after the brief and bloody tenures of the Earls of Moray, Lennox and Mar.

1579

James VI's first 'favourite', his cousin Esme Stuart, arrives from France.

1581

Earl of Morton is executed. The Crown begins regular taxation.

1582

James VI is held prisoner by protestant faction led by William Ruthven, Earl of Gowrie. Conspirators are later executed or exiled.

1584

'Black Acts' passed, asserting supremacy of the Crown in ecclesiastical affairs and denouncing presbyteries.

1587

The King stages elaborate street party in Edinburgh to boost his image.

1600

The Gowrie Conspiracy, in which James claims he was kidnapped and threatened with death by the sons of William Ruthven.

1602

First attempted plantation of Lowland protestants on Isle of Lewis.

1603

Elizabeth I dies, leaving Scots King James VI as heir to the English throne.

verses which he had specially written for the occasion.

The two clashed over whether God (as interpreted by Melville) or God's anointed vessel had the ultimate say.

For James, the real issue was about control. In the Kirk, as in the Highlands, his word was law. The upshot was that Melville was dismissed from his post at the University of St Andrews, thrown into the Tower of London in 1606, and eventually exiled to France, where he died. James won the argument but probably provoked the crisis in the Church which afflicted his son, Charles I.

The short period of 18 years between 1585 and 1603, when James left for London to claim the English throne, had a seismic effect on Scotland. Never before had Scots

been so regularly taxed. In no other reign before this can it be said that royal rule was felt so often and so persistently. And no king before James mused so often and so publicly about how to rule.

Basilicon Doron, a manual of kingship written for the benefit of his son and heir, Prince Henry, was selectively leaked to leading nobles. To make sure his message reached its public, James followed it with a published tract, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*.

For James, of course, being a 'free' king meant that he was divine. The royal propaganda machine pumped out images of him as the biblical King David and the Christian Emperor Constantine.

At Stirling, at the time of the baptism of Prince Henry in 1594, he had two more outrageous claims to

make. The Chapel Royal of James IV was knocked down and rebuilt on the same spot. It was constructed to the same dimensions as Solomon's Temple. James was claiming divine right kingship – in stone.

James also appeared in a tournament on the King's Knot at Stirling dressed as a knight of Malta, a surrogate St George ready to slay the (fake) Turks who were also due to take part. He was already grooming himself as God's Englishman and his son – named after Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII – as an English national icon.

James VI was already planning his entry into his new capital – London, centre of a new 'Great Britain' as he insisted on calling it – in a 'royal and imperial manner'.

The script was ready. It was used in 1603. ●

DAGGERS DRAWN... BUT WHO WAS OUT TO GET WHOM?

Was it a plot to kidnap King James? Or was he acting out a drama while trying to get revenge? The Gowrie affair motives are still a mystery

Sometimes when you are watching a television drama, the plot thickens a little too much. The story throws up more mysterious side issues and more baskets of red herrings than you can take in, until you groan and say: "I just don't understand this any more."

But history can be as confusing as any screenplay, and for proof of this we need only look to the incident called the Gowrie Conspiracy. It happened in Perthshire in 1600, during the reign of James VI, and it was a plot to kill the king. Or was it?

The King was, curiously enough, the only principal member of the cast to survive, so his version is the only one that has been given a hearing. Authors and historians have wrestled with the mystery for generations, delivering a library of books and an acreage of articles, but always coming up against this problem. While the King's account

was hardly believable, no other version has been forthcoming, for dead men tell no tales. So any other version had to be pure conjecture. But this is how the Gowrie Conspiracy happened. Perhaps!

One fine August morning, in exceptionally pleasant weather, the 34-year-old King and a group of a dozen nobles he had known from his youth gathered outside Falkland Palace in the north of Fife to enjoy a buck hunt. This was one of the King's favourite sports, and at that time the greenswards and forests

around Falkland were preserved as a royal game park.

We are even told what James was wearing – a new green hunting suit of English cloth, his second-best socks with silver embroidery, and boots with velvet tops.

He had just acquired a new horse. The hounds were yelping in excitement and the horses were prancing with pent-up energy. It was the sort of moment hunting folk relish. But it was also the moment when one of the King's party, the 19-year-old Alexander, Master of





James VI reaches for a window to call for help in this 1876 painting by John McLaren Barclay. He is held back by Alexander, the Master of Ruthven.

Ruthven, approached James and told him a strange tale.

The previous evening in Perth he had come across a man who was carrying a pitcher of gold coins under his coat and was about to bury the treasure in a field. He soon took him to be a foreign spy – a Jesuit spy, was the phrase used – and had him captured and locked up at his family home, Gowrie House.

Alexander wanted James to come and see this stranger. The story sounded quite credible to James, for at that time there were rumours that

such agents were abroad in Scotland, using bribes to encourage the Catholic faith.

But the King wasn't going to miss his buck hunt for anything, so it was afternoon before his party rode the 12 miles to Gowrie House, where James was given wine to quench his thirst and dinner was prepared.

According to the King's sole version of the story, Alexander had not told his elder brother, the third Earl of Gowrie and head of the family, that the spy was locked up in his house.

This is one of many unlikely

details. But after dinner, Alexander led the King up a spiral staircase to a room in a turret, unlocked the door and there James was confronted with a man holding not a pot of gold but a dagger. Strangely, Alexander left this man with the King while he left to fetch his brother, the earl.

Then, said James, the armed man "became a slave to his presence" and allowed a window to be opened. James bellowed "Treason!" to his party of nobles who were outside, and one claimed he saw the King's reddened face at the window with an

assailant's hand over his mouth.

Hearing the shout, Alexander doubled back up the stair without his brother, while the nobles tried to go to the King's aid but found doors locked against them. They used a ladder as a battering ram until it splintered into firewood, then found hammers which they used until the doors finally gave way. There seem to have been two doors into the turret room.

Most of the rescue party went up a main staircase and hammered at another locked door while the ►



■ Scene of the drama: Gowrie House in Perth, painted by Alexander Douglas. James was taken there after a day's hunting near Falkland.

► quick-thinking, 20-year-old Sir John Ramsay found the spiral staircase and burst in to find the King and Alexander struggling together.

He immediately darked Alexander, Master of Ruthven, to death. From that point onwards, several people were able to give accounts of the action, but this simply led to more confusion. A general melee seems to have taken place inside and outside Gowrie House, and in the course of this the Earl of Gowrie was slain, also by Ramsay.

Meanwhile, it is said that the ordinary folk of Perth gathered outside, shook their fists and shouted "Bloody butchers!" Some of this mob were armed, but they had no real idea of what their well-bred superiors were up to. It's not certain whether they were anxious about the fate of their king or of the Earl of Gowrie, who was also their provost.

The upshot, however, was that the dead bodies of Alexander and the Earl of Gowrie were taken to Edinburgh and put on trial for treason.

Not surprisingly, they were unable to plead and were found guilty unanimously. The long-dead bodies were then hung, drawn and quartered, and the heads stuck on spikes.

So what could have been the

motive behind the Gowrie Conspiracy? James VI had a long running antipathy to that family. It was the brothers' grandfather who led the murder of Riccio in the presence of James's mother, Queen Mary.

It was their father who led the so-called Ruthven Raid of 1582, during which the teenage king was held prisoner for 10 months and made to sign several proclamations favouring protestant rule. The older Gowrie was later executed by James for his part in the Raid. But it also seems

that he had, when Treasurer, loaned £80,000 to the King—a debt still owed to his sons.

So the bloody events at Gowrie House had provided James with both revenge and a cleared slate. Also, he was able to confiscate their lands.

What might the Gowries have gained from a plot? A protestant coup? Hardly.

Another less likely theory is that Alexander was retaliating after James, with his known predilection for young men, had made passes at him. There is no doubt that one

young favourite of the King, John Ramsay, profited from this episode after personally dispatching both Gowrie brothers. He was made Viscount Haddington and later, having followed James to London, became the first Earl of Holderness.

One writer who has tried to unravel the Gowrie Conspiracy quotes an old lady's belief that "it is a great comfort to think that at the Day of Judgment we shall know the truth." Until then, however, we must remain mystified. ■



■ What's going on? This sketch of the affair has baffled historians.

■ This 1822 map of the Highlands shows the original districts and distribution of clans and families.



THE TAMING OF THE FRONTIERS

On succeeding to the English throne, one of James VI's main aims was to bring order to the 'uncivilised' parts of Scotland



The Peel Tower Defended – illustrating an imaginary Border raid of the sort that encouraged James VI to set up his Border Commission in 1605.

James VI once observed that a king was the natural father of all his lieges – “and as the father is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and virtuous government of his children, even so is the king bound to care for all his subjects”

Where children offended, however, a show of paternal wrath, correction and chastisement was obligatory. On this analogy the worst-behaved offspring were to be found in Gaeldom, the Borders and the Earldom of Orkney. And the inhabitants of these regions were to have much cause to doubt the sincerity of monarchical affection.

In his *Basilicon Doron*, a book of advice addressed to his son, James coupled Highland and Border oppressions. He distinguished two sorts of people in the *Gàidhealtachd* – the one mixed with some show of civility, the other, in the Hebrides, utterly barbarous. To tame the latter, he advised the planting of Lowland colonists. They would impact favourably on the more receptive Gaels, while the more recalcitrant were to be “rooted out” or transported.

He envisaged that the Borders after 1603, in the ‘muddest’ of his kingdom, would be “as easily ruled as any part thereof”.

Orkney and Shetland were a less pressing issue but there the incompetence and outrageous behaviour of his own cousins would furnish the perfect excuse for royal intervention.

In exploring these issues, it is truly remarkable how many historians applaud James’s actions on the margins of his Scottish kingdom, without sparing a thought for the victims. State terrorism is sanctioned, traditional societies condemned.

The King’s Highland policy can be summed up in three words – plantation, deracination and extirpation. He intended the ‘planting’ of colonies of Lowlanders in such places as Campbeltown,

Stornoway and Fort William – similar to schemes in Ulster (to break resistance of Irish Catholics) and in Virginia (where Amerindians would be ‘civilised’ through contact with whites).

Deracination involved, quite simply, pulling out the roots of Gaelic culture. The Statutes of Iona (1609) initiated a process of several generations’ duration aimed at suppressing the language and customs of the natives.

Extirpation meant, in the final resort, destruction. James himself stated that he would be unwilling to exterminate recalcitrant Gaels except with ‘just cause’. Such cause was easily distinguished with reference to clans such as the MacGregors and the MacDonalds of Islay, both of which were brutally persecuted by the Campbells with the co-operation, and sometimes the coercion, of the Crown. While far from successful in the short term, James’s policies were echoed in the motivation behind such events as the Massacre of Glencoe (1692), the aftermath of the Jacobite Risings, and the Highland Clearances.

Whom kings and historians wish to destroy they first describe, and exactly the same language was applied to Borderers as to Gaels. The rhetoric of Scottish government referred to the ‘clans’ of the Borders, ‘companies of wicked men coupled in fellowship by occasion of their surnames’. The bandits of the ancient frontier were dismissed as ‘gangs’, the first usage of the modern term.

The Marcher lords had been encouraged by successive kings as a defence against the English but through most of the 16th century they were regarded as a law unto themselves and a threat to the peace of the realm. To make matters worse, the Scottish Borderers had more in common with their counterparts – and sometimes kin – on the English side of the Border than they did with their fellow Scots. A Borderer was described as one

who “will be Scottish when he may and English when he can”. Few outsiders could understand a culture in which reiving, rustling and blackmail were seen as key economic activities – celebrated in ballads with as much relish as there was heat in the condemning language of central authority.

The Borders were uncomfortably close to Edinburgh and local feuds often bloodied the streets of the capital. At the same time, the system of alliances and allegiances through kinship could imply that, by tackling individual trouble makers, the King risked civil war. For example, it was with the aim of isolating the rambunctious Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell, that James trumped up a charge of witchcraft against him. Rebellion by Lord Maxwell in 1588 – a year of paranoia about a Catholic invasion engendered by the Spanish Armada – afforded the opportunity for retaliation.

The Kinmont Willie episode in 1597 led to a joint commission with the English to pacify the area. From 1605, two dozen ‘mounties’ policed the Scottish side, leading to the execution of over 140 of the ‘nimblest and most powerful’ brigands.

The notorious Grahams on the West March were forcibly transported to Ireland where, it was doubtless thought, their violent energies could be put to good use, and when they returned to Eskdale they were dispatched to the Continent, whence, presumably, it would be harder to abscond. So hard-pressed and unjustly treated did the Grahams feel that they appealed for help to the Earl of Montrose as ‘head of their name’.

The King, however, had one very powerful weapon – in the shape of patronage. By the end of his reign several Border chiefs became attached to his interest through the bait of ennoblement.

Royal policies towards the Borders and the Highlands were developed in harness. Once he became King of England, with additional resources



■ Borders scene in winter. Talking of his total kingdom, King James envisaged that this 'middest' area would be 'as easily ruled as any part thereof'

reinforcing his notions of Divine Right, he was well placed to take more concerted action. Specialists emerged who were adept at suppression in the name of civilisation. Bishop Andrew Knox moved on to Ireland from the Iona statutes, while the Stewarts of Ochiltree gained expertise in the Borders and the Western Isles and, as true frontiersmen, they were also to be involved in the murky business of Orkney and Shetland.

Earl Patrick Stewart (1565-1615) was a remarkable enigma, a man who displayed all the intriguing foibles of his illustrious family but showed characteristics which defied analysis. His father, Robert, an illegitimate son of James V, was sent to Orkney in the 1560s. He acquired the Earldom of Orkney and Lordship of Shetland in 1581, an honour which in no way diminished his reputation as one "dissolute in life, vain and nothing worth, a man full of evil".

In the lore of the Northern Isles Robert and Patrick became notorious oppressors of their people, yet historians have acknowledged their Renaissance proclivity for lavishing expenditure on splendid palaces, at Birsay and Kirkwall, and castles such as Noltland on Westray and Scalloway in Shetland – for the building of which, according to tradition, thousands of eggs were extorted from the locals to make mortar.

The history of Orkney and Shetland in the 16th and early 17th centuries is of such complexity that it can only be truly unravelled by scholars with close local knowledge. The islands were famous for pirates and strong ale. Foreigners exploited the rich fisheries. The law which governed the freeholders were Norse in origin but a host of newcomers from the mainland brought in Scots law with its alien feudal practices compounding legal obfuscation and grinding the hapless islanders between mill-stones of competing systems. The

Stewarts, like most of their contemporaries were short of money, another circumstance which had a negative impact on the inhabitants. Laurence Bruce of Culmalindie, law official of Shetland and half brother of Earl Robert, had his own agenda. It was he who built the most northerly castle in the British Isles at Muness in Unst. Bruce was one of several local lairds opposed to the Stewarts who spent much time on a series of minor civil wars.

Shortly after his succession, Black Patie was the target of witchcraft allegedly inspired by his brother John, who had no sooner been exonerated for his crime than he went after his accuser, supposedly tearing out his heart and drinking his blood.

Patrick's own heinous deeds have now been subject to more sympathetic interpretation. He was no angel and no-one has attempted a white-washing job but, for example, one of many charges later ranged against him included the assertion that he forbade the islanders to assist shipwrecked seamen, a particularly serious

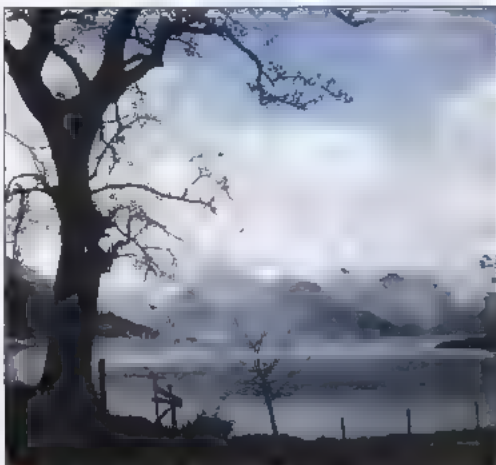
accusation in the isles where the North Sea meets the mighty Atlantic. However, Patrick explained that he simply insisted that when people went to the aid of beleaguered ships a bailie must be present to account for salvage, which he thereby hoped to maximise.

James VI was not unsympathetic to Patrick's plight but the two were placed on an inevitable collision course when the king appointed James Law Bishop of Orkney and ordered that the bishopric be funded out of the comital revenues.

When funds were not forthcoming, Law accused the Earl of oppressing his subjects. A further complication was Patrick's feud with the Earl of Caithness who, in a bizarre episode, captured some Orcadians sheltering from a storm, plied them with booze and shaved off one half of each man's beard before sending them back out on the gale-lashed Pentland Firth.

Black Patie was summoned to Edinburgh to explain the feud and the matter of episcopal finance, to which was added the charge of treason. He spent most the rest of his life as a prisoner in the castles of Edinburgh and Dumbarton. In 1611 the Privy Council abolished Norse law in the islands. Patrick's son, Robert, instigated an unsuccessful rebellion in Orkney for which he was executed. Accused of collusion, the Earl was beheaded in 1615 and "good riddance" the folk of Orkney and Shetland used to say.

However, the appraisal of modern historians suggests there were those in the islands who were prepared to support the Earl in defence of ancient custom and a certain way of life; people who preferred the legal heritage of the Vikings and who regarded the Stewart earls, for all their faults, as a last ditch defence of insular identity in opposition to the depredations of increasing numbers of grasping lairds who cared little for their culture. ■



■ The Highlands: for the planting of Lowlanders.

Is unity one head with two crowns?

That was a question both sets of reluctant 'Britons' asked as James tried to match-make Thistle and Rose and found they didn't mix

In 1603 James VI of Scots achieved what was surely his greatest ambition – when he became James I of England as well. Exactly a century before, James IV of Scots had married Margaret, daughter of Henry VII of England – the marriage of 'The Thistle and the Rose', as William Dunbar called it in a magnificent poem to celebrate the event.

It seems Henry's courtiers were worried that James IV, or his descendants, might one day inherit the English throne. Henry told them that, in that event, the greater would draw the less. If a Scottish king were to gain England, he would be bound to make it the senior partner in a Greater Britain.

In the short term, this marriage didn't prevent an Anglo-Scottish war, and the death of James IV on the field of Flodden in 1513. But in the longer term, various births and deaths in the two royal lines meant that James VI, great grandson of James IV, was in the late 16th century the obvious heir of the childless Elizabeth of England. The cannv Elizabeth would do no more than promise that she would not prejudge James's title to England.

Still, James made it his fixed

policy to do nothing to offend her. He held to that policy even when, in 1587, she had his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, executed.

Historians have taken James severely to task for this. But he had not been brought up to respect his mother, and in any case it is not clear what he could have done to save her. James's policy paid off, as it became increasingly obvious that he had no real rival to his claim.

Elizabeth died on March 24, 1603, and less than three days later Sir Robert Carey arrived at Holyrood with the news. King James was delighted – the views of the horses Sir Robert used on his hell-for-leather ride north are not recorded.

James told his Scottish subjects: "Where I thought to have employed you with some armour, now, I employ only your hearts, to the good prospering of me in my success and journey."

He promptly went south, to a royal court of infinitely greater pomp and circumstance than that of Scotland.

James was a shrewd man, but he liked to be flattered. One Scot grumbled that the obsequious grovelling with which the English welcomed James would spoil a good king. James would have enjoyed, had ▶



King James VI (and I of England) is shown in the top-centre of this painting – The Gun Powder Plot – surrounded by the lords.



TIMELINE

1603

Union of the Crowns as James VI also becomes James I of England. In theory the two crowns remain separate.

1605

Beginning of plantation of Scottish protestants in Ulster. Native catholics forced off their land.

1606

Andrew Melville, leading light of presbyterianism, imprisoned and later exiled.

1607

James VI remarks that he rules the Scots better with his pen in England than by the sword in Scotland.

1609

The beginning of systematic state terrorism against Gaelic Scotland. State control increases nationwide.

1610

Restoration of episcopacy adds to earlier measures designed to force crown authority on the reformed Church.

1617

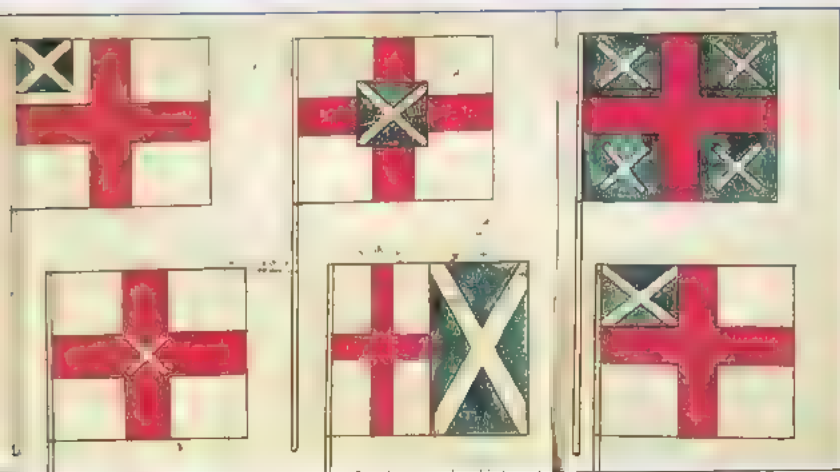
James VI pays his first and only visit to Scotland since succeeding to the English throne.

1623

Ordinary Scots suffer during the worst famine in James's reign.

1625

King James VI dies and is succeeded by his second son, Charles I.



■ Some of the designs for a union flag proposed around 1603.

▶ he lived to see it, the painting that Peter Paul Rubens delivered in 1634 for the ceiling of the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall Palace. Called *The Apotheosis of James I*, it shows the elderly monarch being wafted up to heaven by a variety of plump and skimpily dressed allegorical figures.

James wanted as full a union of the two realms as possible. He protested that it was no more natural for a king to rule two countries than for a man to have two wives. He envisaged a single country called Great Britain, with one set of laws, one parliament, one national church and a unified economy. This raised huge practical problems.

In 1605 Sir Thomas Craig, a thoughtful Scots lawyer, wrote a book, *De Unione*, that was broadly in favour of further ties, but warned

that any attempt at assimilation of the two legal systems in the near future would be premature. He also pointed to a problem of Anglo-Scottish relations that is still with us - harmonious relations require that Scottish interests be respected.

On the other hand, given the disparity in size of the two nations, how realistic is it for us to expect the English to be as obsessively concerned with us as we often seem to be with them?

If the relatively technical matter of legal systems raised passions, defenders of the Episcopalian Church of England and of the Church of Scotland containing bishops but with a strong Presbyterian element were going to be even more entrenched in the positions they took up.

James could call as often as he

liked for a 'union of love' between the two nations, but they were simply not prepared to be merged.

English public opinion depicted the Scots as poor, uncivilised and intent on flocking to London to sponge off the royal court. Scottish public opinion replied in kind, and more than one duel was fought at court between an Englishman and a Scot.

James caused the Scottish Parliament to pass an act that prohibited all anti-English writings, and warned his English subjects that the Scottish nation "cannot be hated by any that loves me". This sort of activity was probably counter-productive, and James's great plans came to almost nothing. A new Union Jack was created for the King's ships, but few people used the term 'Great Britain' or thought of themselves as 'Britons' - or even 'North Britons' or 'South Britons'.

The turbulent people of the Borders did not become law-abiding just because their homeland was rechristened the 'Middle Shires'. But the area did become slightly easier to police, and a body of five English and five Scots commissioners appointed in 1605 saw to it that, in one year, "above 140 of the nimblest and most powerful thieves in all the Borders" went to the gallows.

The phrase 'Union of the Crowns' suggests that at least some of King James's schemes for assimilation were successful. They were not, so the phrase could be misleading. In

theory the crowns remained separate, but with the same person wearing them. In practice, Scotland came to be increasingly run from England.

As Henry VII had foretold, the greater was drawing the less, and the result was a century of constantly recurring tensions.

James was a reasonably successful King of England, though he didn't work as hard at the job of kingship as he had when younger. He remained, even as an absentee, an outstanding King of Scots. The Privy Council, Parliament and Court of Session were successfully manipulated by his hand-picked royal servants, who often served on all three bodies.

One was Sir Thomas Hamilton, eventually Earl of Haddington, but better known as 'Tam o' the Cowgate'. At one stage he was both Lord Advocate (the king's prosecutor) and a Court of Session judge. In one particular case he apparently considered appearing, as Lord Advocate, before himself as judge, captivating himself by his eloquence, and finding in favour of himself. His friends persuaded him that this was taking manipulation too far.

Other trusted servants included Alexander, Earl of Dunfermline, whose house is now part of Loretto School at Musselburgh, and George, Earl of Dunbar, whose splendid tomb in Dunbar parish church was restored in recent years after a fire.

James had promised the Scots in 1603 that "I shall visit you every

FEELING THE FIRST PINCH OF THE TAXMAN

The genesis of the modern nation-state can be clearly seen with the Jacobean government of James VI. As never before, the Crown sought central control of taxation, the law, the media and the Church. But how did it affect ordinary people?

For the first time, many Scots felt a regular pinch from the taxman. Between 1596-7 the King's accountants, the Octavians, brought in a raft of measures to rectify the ruinous state of Crown finances - but this was mostly achieved by forcing other Scots households to foot the bill.

The taxman and the financier became newly-prominent agents of kingship. These included Edinburgh lawyer Archibald Primrose - mastermind of earlier taxation schemes - and Jingle George, the Edinburgh goldsmith. George Heriot. It was the burghs and lairds, the feuars of kirklands, the

lawyers and other upstanding groups in society who bore the brunt of the new levels of taxation. Inequities gradually arose, reaching a climax in the Parliament of 1621 in what James called 'the greatest taxation that was ever granted in that kingdom' - an expected rake of £230,000 a year.

In law, besides the programme of 'civilising' the frontiers, the state also placed Justices of the Peace throughout the country in 1609 to bring a more direct relationship between central government and the localities. The effectiveness of this was limited at first, but it was an important blueprint that etched itself over local tradition.

To gain popular support for its policies, the Jacobean government often turned to the media, much as modern governments do. James's desire to get the Scots to shake off entrenched views he found irksome -

Scottish national and religious identity, for example - resulted in deployment of propaganda like flags and symbols designed to encourage 'Britishness' and printed material denouncing Presbyterianism.

The messages failed, but the media showed it could be effective.

The great Presbyterian ideal - that control of the Church be in the hands of local congregations - found itself under constant political attack. The 'Black Acts' of 1584 aimed to reassert Crown supremacy, a move bolstered by the restoration of episcopacy in 1610.

After 1615, with the Five Articles of Perth that were forced through the Scots Parliament, the Jacobean government attempted to ram its authority down ministers' throats. A policy tried to backfire catastrophically



■ Elizabeth I of England, whose death was announced to a 'delighted' James by Sir Robert Carey after a three-day ride from London.

three years at the least, or oftener, as I shall have occasion."

He enjoyed life down south too much to keep this promise, and came back only once in 22 years. The royal apartments at Edinburgh Castle have recently been restored by Historic Scotland to look as far as possible as they would have seen them in 1617.

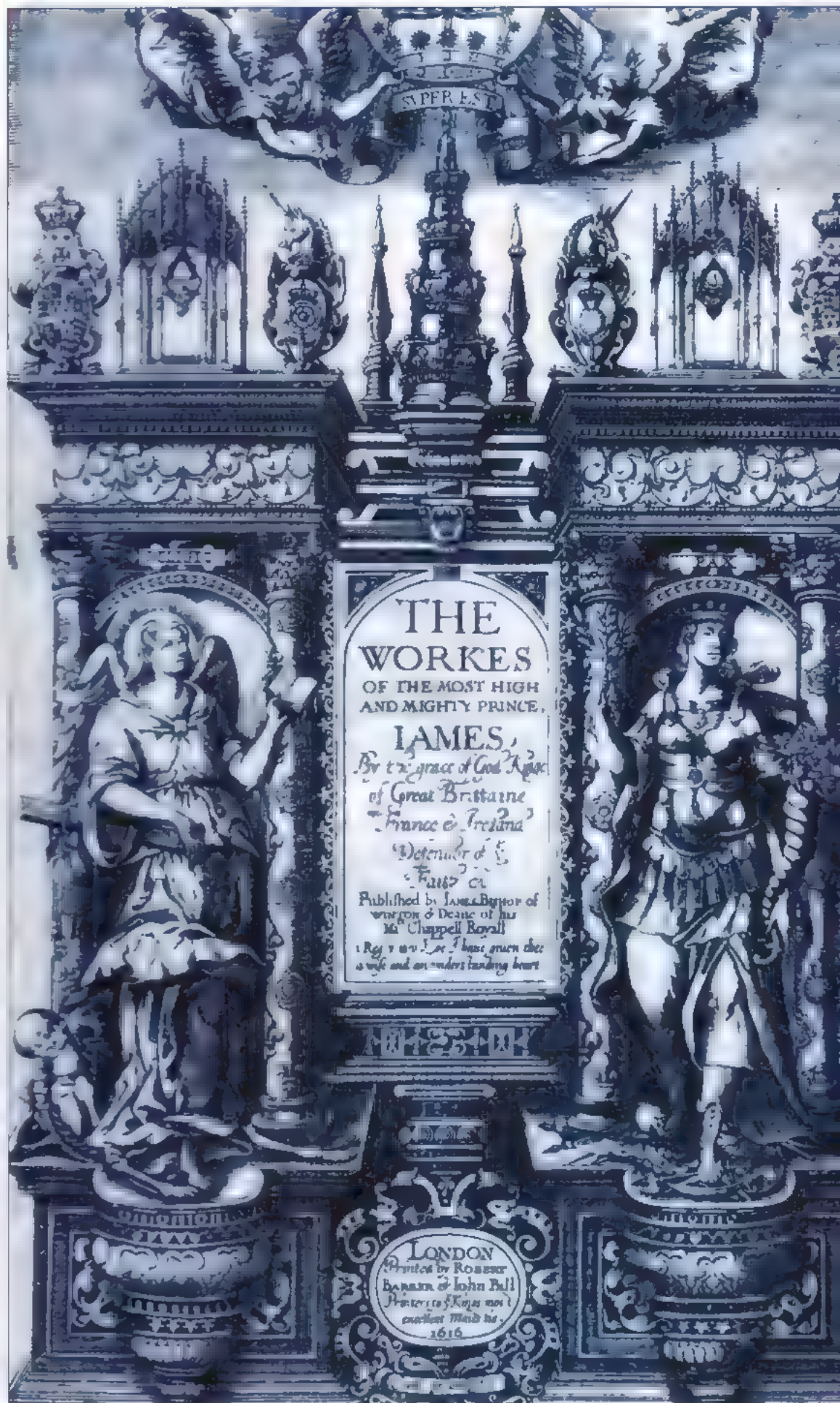
James never forgot Scotland, and one of his earliest actions when he got to London was to organise a postal service between Edinburgh and Berwick. This allowed him to keep his knowledge of Scottish affairs up to date by means of a steady stream of letters to the Scottish Privy Council.

It was with some justification that he boasted in 1607 that he governed Scotland more successfully with a pen than many previous kings had done by the sword. Any resentment that leading Scots may have felt about an absentee king and government by remote control stayed for the most part below the surface – until the reign of James's son, the inept Charles I.

It used to be argued that the English lost out in 1603, when they acquired a bad king. Most English historians think rather better of James now. It can't be proved, but it can be believed, that the Scots lost out, at least in terms of their national identity, with the removal of the royal court and its wise king.

In a 17th century monarchy, the court was a focus of national life, and of patronage for entrepreneurs and artists, to an extent that is hard to grasp today. Scots architects missed the patronage of a king who had already been inspired by the example of his brother-in-law, Christian IV of Denmark, to embark on some grand building projects.

And the sturdy tradition of writing poetry and prose in Scots sustained a serious blow when James's court moved to London. ■



■ Elaborate title page of 'The Workes of The Most High and Mighty Prince James' published in London in 1616.

Queen's foe who

His acclaimed genius attracted the Queen but his political philosophy did not. The irony was that George Buchanan was her son's teacher

George Buchanan was a brilliant scholar and, like many scholars, had a big head. Unlike most,

however, he had good reason to be big headed. In his own day, he won European renown for his learning, and his reputation lasted at least a couple of centuries after his death.

Samuel Johnson, that English wit and know-all, was once asked what he would have said of him had Buchanan been an Englishman. His scornful response was, "Why, sir, I should not have said, had he been an Englishman, what I will say of him as a Scotchman, that he was the only man of genius whom his country ever produced."

That remark came two centuries after Buchanan's death. Even Johnson appreciated his worth, as had Camden, Grotius, Milton, Dryden, David Hume, Adam Smith and Sir Walter Scott, to name just a few.

Such was the interest in his cranium that anatomists of his day removed his skull from his grave in Greyfriars churchyard in Edinburgh where his headless skeleton still remains so that the skull might be studied. His head, in a curious way, has become the intellectual property of Edinburgh University.

But when his head was firmly attached to his shoulders, Buchanan was hailed as the greatest Latin poet of his age. At court he read the Latin poems to Mary, Queen of Scots. And when he fell out with her, he blackened her name for all he was worth in his *History of Scotland* and played a significant part in her downfall in accusations against her at York and London. He became tutor

■ Scotsman extraordinary: Buchanan's internationally-famed intellect even won grudging praise from Dr Johnson.

tutored the king



■ The title page of the 1587 edition of Buchanan's History of Scotland. Someone has scored out his name and scribbled in Latin 'evil heretic'.

to her son, the young King James VI, who later ordered his writings to be burned as subversive.

Born at Killearn, Stirlingshire, in 1506, he was educated, as he said himself, 'in the schools of his native country'. His father died when he was young. He relied on support from his mother's family, the Heriots, who hailed from East Lothian. In 1520, in his 14th year, his uncle sent him to study at the university in Paris. Many able Scots made a beeline there. But his uncle's death forced him home again after two years' study.

From scholar he turned soldier. In 1523 he took part in a military expedition to the Borders after an English invasion. But his future lay in cultivating the art of writing rather

than war. In 1525, he became a student at St Andrews University. He sat at the feet of the famous Scots philosopher, John Mair. When Mair left to lecture at Paris University, Buchanan followed. On graduating from Paris in 1528, he taught for a spell in one of the Paris colleges where Calvin and Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, had studied. He also acted as tutor to the young Earl of Cassilis. In Paris, too, he admitted coming into contact with Lutheran views which were spreading like wildfire.

On returning home by 1535, he became tutor to one of King James V's illegitimate sons. But he offended the Church and was suspected of Luther's heresy when he wrote two

satirical poems attacking Franciscan friars. Imprisoned as a heretic, he made good his escape to England. Scotland had become too hot for him. By the time he made for Paris, he found Cardinal Beaton had arrived on a visit from Scotland, so Buchanan prudently retreated to Bordeaux where he had been offered a teaching post. On moving to Portugal in 1547, he found himself again pursued for heresy by the Inquisition, was shut up in a monastery for months, and escaped to England in 1552. Yet his thoughts were not to return home but to go back to France.

Only in 1561, as the Reformation took root, did he arrive home a seasoned heretic. He quickly identified himself with Knox's church. In his attitude to Mary, Queen of Scots, however, he initially took a milder line than Knox. He found himself at court, employed by Mary to translate Spanish, French and Latin documents. Mary was said to be glad of the company of those who had travelled to other lands. So after dinner, when she settled down to read, Buchanan was invited to provide instruction.

His learning brought culture to the court. Mary responded by granting him a pension for his services. Later he was made principal of St Leonard's college in St Andrews University.

The friendship between queen and scholar did not last. When Darnley, Mary's second husband, was murdered at Kirk o' Field in 1567, Buchanan turned against his Queen whom he believed was implicated. Darnley, of course, was the son of the Earl of Lennox and Buchanan, born in Lennox country, felt himself attached to the Lennox family. As a result, he became one of Mary's great detractors. He justified her enforced abdication in 1567, when he was appointed Moderator of the General Assembly. He strongly supported making her son king, and helped bring the case against Mary in England in 1568 and 1569.

When he became senior tutor to young James VI, he proved a stern disciplinarian. James held him in great awe, even trembled at his presence. Not content with teaching James that his mother was a whore, adulterer and murderer, Buchanan also tried to instil in James

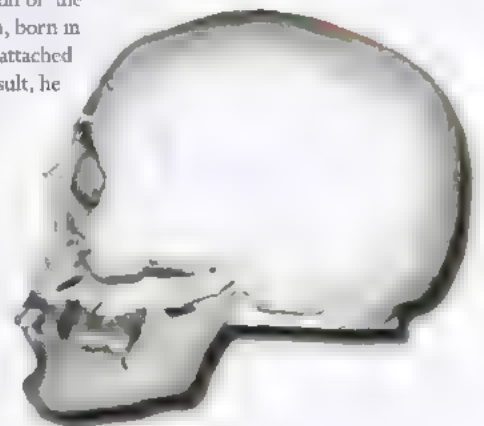
his revolutionary political theories. He put the case for limited, contractual monarchy. Kings had been set up by an act of the people. A contract had been established. If a ruler failed to keep his or her side of the bargain, the people had a right to resist.

As king, James spent his life repudiating Buchanan's philosophy. The antidote he found in the divine right of kings, which James pushed for all he was worth. God had appointed men as kings and invested them with power. Kings answered to God alone. That affirmation underpinned James's kingship.

In other ways Buchanan did his work well enough. James's learning was formidable even by the standard of the age. Lessons began with prayers, followed by Greek, the New Testament, Isocrates or Plutarch. After breakfast came the Latin authors — Livy, Justin or Cicero. The afternoon was spent in Latin composition, arithmetic, geography, astronomy, logic and rhetoric. As a party piece, James liked to translate aloud a chapter of the Bible from Latin into French and from French into English.

George Buchanan was a giant among Scots — a gifted Latin poet, translator of the Psalms which brought him international fame, courtier and critic of monarchs and churchmen, political revolutionary and historian.

Scotland was much the poorer when he died in Edinburgh in September, 1582. ■



■ Intellectual property of Edinburgh University: a part reconstruction of the skull that held the brilliant brain of George Buchanan, scholar.

Rising again from the wrath of the wreckers

PART TWO of our look at Dundee recalls how the city has swung between fortune and misfortune. And how its old confidence has come bouncing back

Daniel Defoe liked what he found in the Dundee of 1725 "A large, populous city, which well deserves the title of Bonnie Dundee, so often given it in discourse as well as in song. It is exceeding populous, full of stately homes and large, handsome streets. Particularly it has four very grand streets, with a large market place in the middle, the largest and fairest in Scotland, except only that of Aberdeen. The inhabitants here appear like gentlemen, as well as men of business, and yet are real merchants too, and make good what we see so eminently in England, that true bred merchants are the best of gentlemen."

The city's ambitions can be reckoned by its confident commissioning of William Adam to build a new Town House in 1731. What he built was perhaps Dundee's best loved building, rivalled only by the Old Steeple and Cox's Lum – a jute mill chimney, if you will. When Adam's masterpiece was torn down 200 years later in an act of unforgivable municipal folly to accommodate the City Square, there were riots in the street – surely a unique accolade for a council building.

The City Square and Caird Hall project was the work of James Thomson (not the Victorian historian but burgh architect and city engineer in the early 20th century), a man of rare gifts and vision on behalf of his adopted Dundee.

His proposal was not to demolish the Town House but to move it across the road to a site adjoining the City Churches, where it would have been seen to infinitely greater effect. Three opportunities to implement that breathtaking, audacious solution have been declined, the most recent in 1998.

Dundee's economic confidence in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was, like so many other



■ Dundee's William Adam Town House, pictured in 1900. It was built in 1731 and there were riots in the street when it was demolished in 1932 to make way for a new city-centre plan.





Burgh architect James Thomson wanted to keep William Adam's Town House by moving it (as shown in this drawing) across the road to a site adjoining the City Churches.

► urban communities, achieved on the backs of a mass of workers – especially weavers in Dundee's case, because the manufacture of cloth had long been one of its industrial staples – who toiled slavishly for a pittance.

Characteristically, Dundee demonstrated its penchant for radical politics by forming the Friends of Liberty in 1792. Their impetus may well have been the authorities' treatment of one of the ringleaders of the Tayside Meal Mobs.

The mobs were starving citizens who raided ships in the harbour and the more prosperous farms of Angus for food. Defoe's was a selective judgment of his 'Bonnie Dundee'.

The solitary ringleader to be caught pleaded for mercy, and to be allowed to remain with his family, whatever his punishment. Instead he was banished to Botany Bay for life. Oh, and seven years' hard labour. The Friends of Liberty planted

a tree in the High Street and subjected the loathed Lord Provost, Alexander Riddoch, to public ridicule by making him walk round it shouting "Liberty and Equality forever!"

It did not go down well, and when some of Defoe's 'true gentlemen' uprooted the tree, it took a detachment of troops to quell a week of rioting.

The thing reverberated in London, and only the sustained ruthlessness of Government repression over 15 years – and a thickening of Dundee voices in Botany Bay – put an end to it all. But Dundee's social conscience was awakened. The twin ingredients of its political philosophy, socialism and nationalism, were in place – and there they still remain.

With the industrial revolution, Dundee's sea-going instincts developed world-wide horizons. The catalyst, one more fine example of civic self-confidence, was the employment of the

engineering genius Thomas Telford to develop the harbour in 1825. As usual, the city did nothing by halves.

Its whaling fleet grew to be the biggest in Britain, and when the city's expertise in importing and exporting turned to jute, an industry unfurled into a phenomenon.

The mill-owners became dynasties, the jute barons made fortunes, Dundee's mud-coloured stone was heaped into gaunt-walled mill buildings and tenement canyons, and one way or another, the huge workforce (much of it female) so impinged on every family in the city that jute slipped imperceptibly into working-class culture, and a Dundee cliché, a status which endures even though the industry is now extinct.

Its final irony is that Cox's majestic Lum, once the egotistical symbol of the world's biggest jute works, and the restored Verdant Mill have become



■ Captain Scott's Dundee-built Discovery is now a major tourist attraction in the city.

icons of the leisure industry, tourism of all things

By the time the First World War began, however, both jute and whaling were done for as economic mainstays, and Dundee suffered as a result. But it was a slow decline and that old resilience would have seen folk through had it not been for the Battle of Loos.

Among the territorial battalions of the Black Watch, the Fourth Battalion was almost entirely composed of Dundee men. The foot soldiers were from the factories and the streets, the officers from the professions, fathers marched with sons, and the city called it 'Dundee's Ain'.

The Fourth Battalion left for France in February, 1915. After Loos in September of the same year, it could no longer function as a fighting unit, and its drags were amalgamated with the Fifth.

All but one of its 21 officers were dead or seriously wounded and 235 of its 423 men. Loos

was not their first battle on French soil, merely the last. The boisterous scenes in Dundee in February had bid fond farewells to 1,100 men. 'Dundee's Flodden' they called it. 'The floggers o' the streets a' wried awa'.

In the inter-war years, even as Dundee's traditional industrial base declined, James Thomson was planning for the city of the future. His many achievements included Scotland's first centrally-heated council housing scheme and a city bypass at a time when traffic was still a trickle. And although Dundee was slow to catch on to some aspects of his vision, he was first to propose a Tay road bridge and an airport at Riverside.

Dundee has never tired of reinventing itself, never balked at breengin' in where angels fear to tread, brimming with its own vigorous self-confidence.

In the post-war years it embraced light

electronics, flattened its old stone-built heart, built a new concrete Overgate which it has since demolished and re-built, erected its road bridge (in the wrong place and distancing the town centre from its waterfront in the process) and wonder of wonders established an international reputation in the 1990s for medical science, the arts, and environmental sensitivity, which is some reinvention of Juteopolis.

One of the biggest pedestrianisation schemes in Britain has given the town centre back to the people, and with the remarkable marketing tool of Captain Scott's Dundee-built Discovery for its flagship, it has put a spring back in its step and one more era of prosperity beckons.

Perhaps best of all, the city has begun to value its landscape setting again, and after its long and grimy industrial modern history, it has also begun to be bonnie again. ●

The Scots sailor who



■ Surrounded by friends: this imagined reconstruction of Selkirk in his island home shows his enjoyment of animal company, although he had no dog.

He proved that truth can be at least as strange as fiction. Fife sailor Alexander Selkirk really did find himself alone on an island. And he really was the inspiration for Defoe's novel

Few people doubt these days that the experiences of the Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk from Lower Largo in Fife was Daniel Defoe's inspiration for his famous novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, published in 1719.

Selkirk was marooned for four and a half years on the island of Juan Fernandez, 400 miles off the coast of Chile, and after his rescue and return in 1709 his story was so widely told that Defoe could hardly have missed it.

While most biographers claim there is no evidence that the two men met, others say that they did come together for a head-to-head chat at the house of Mrs Demaris Daniel in Bristol.

Whether or not that is true, the similarities in the stories are such as to be more than coincidental. Indeed, the differences are more interesting. *Crusoe* was blown ashore in a storm, while Selkirk chose to be put ashore; *Crusoe* stayed on his fictional island for 28 years, almost a quarter of a century longer than Selkirk; and there

was no Man Friday on Selkirk's real island although there were goats which became his source of food, clothing and companionship.

But how did Selkirk come to end up in such a spot in the first place?

He was born in 1676, the son of a cobbler in Lower Largo on the north bank of the Forth – the seventh son, actually, for whom superstition decreed that he would turn out to be special. Just how special no-one could have guessed. Although he trained as a shoemaker, he had a special spot on a grassy knoll above the village where he would gaze out to sea and dream of becoming a sailor.

Never an easy person, his fate was soon decided for him when he was cited to appear before the Kirk session for indecent conduct in church.

To sidestep this inconvenience and kill two birds with one stone, he ran off to sea at the age of 19. The salt in his blood soon became apparent as he immediately excelled at seamanship and it was this instinctive aptitude

that was probably to save his life.

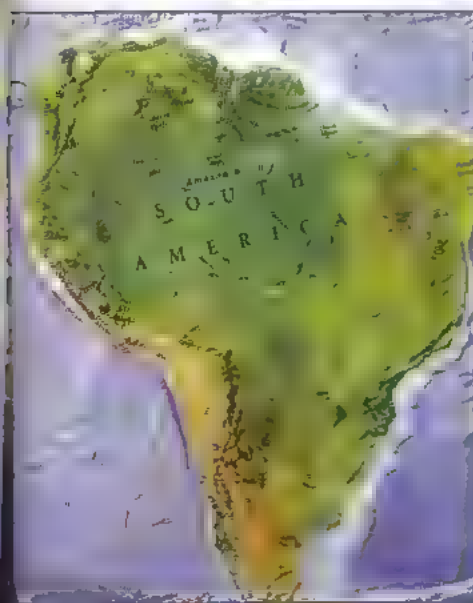
Eight years later, in 1703, he had become an impressive navigator and found himself in the post of sailing master of a galley called *Cinque Ports*, which was part of a privateering expedition setting off to plunder Spanish ships and ports on the Pacific coast of South America. It was a successful trip in terms of booty, but in terms of his relationship with the captain, Thomas Stradling, it was less than positive.

The two men were constantly quarrelling and, as they returned to England, Selkirk contended that as the ship had received so much damage it would be wise to stop and repair it. In effect, he was saying: if you go much further, we will sink.

Stradling disagreed and insisted on pushing on – without the troublesome Selkirk, who by now had demanded to be set ashore on the nearest land, the deserted island of Juan Fernandez.

While he was subsequently proved right – the ship later sank, killing most

inspired Crusoe's tale



■ Circled: Selkirk's island, Juan Fernandez, off Chile's coast.

of those aboard – he had a fit of regret as it left him on the island shore with his clothes and bedding, a firelock, some powder, bullets, tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible, mathematical instruments and some books. He ran down the beach after the disappearing ship, calling for it to come back, but little did he know then how fortunate he was to be ignored.

He certainly didn't feel fortunate in the beginning and suffered from a severe melancholy for the first eight months of his stay, terrified of being left alone in such a desolate place.

However, after he had built two huts with pimento trees, covered them with long grass and lined them with the skins of goats – which he killed with his gun, as long as his pound of powder lasted – he began to cheer up and made friends with some of the other goats. There were also cats on the island that gave him some company, although he was annoyed by the many rats he found there.

After about two years of dancing with his cats and carving his initials on trees and his gun – he saw two ships and ran down

to the shore to attract their attention; then he realised they were Spanish and ran back to take cover as they opened fire on him. A landing party was unable to track him down and the ships eventually left.

He was finally found by a friendly ship – that of Captain William Dampier, who had been in overall charge of the expedition that had taken him there, and who was now acting under the command of another led by Captain Woodes Rogers.

Dampier convinced Rogers that here was a handy discovery – an excellent sailor-navigator – and Selkirk was promptly appointed to the command of a captured ship. It was Rogers's later account of the rescue of Alexander Selkirk – "clothed in goat-skins and looking wilder than the first owners of them" – that excited so much interest (not least in Defoe) on the ships' return to England.

Here is an extract from the captain's story. "He was at first much pestered by cats and rats that bred in great numbers from some of each species which had got ashore from ships that had put in there for wood and water.

"The rats gnawed his feet and clothes whilst asleep, which obliged him to cherish the cats with his goats' flesh, by which so many of them became so tame that they would lie about in hundreds, and soon delivered him from the rats.

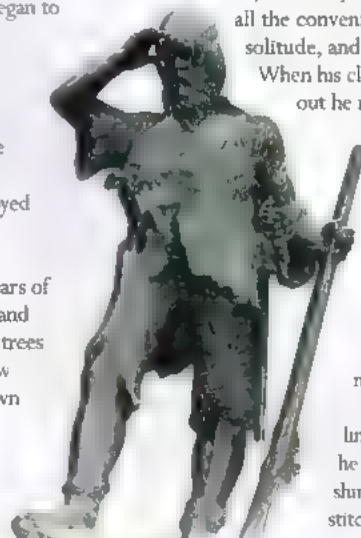
"He likewise tamed some kids; to divert himself, he would now and then sing and dance with them and his cats; so that by the favour of providence, and the vigour of his youth, being now but thirty years old, he came, at last, to conquer all the conveniences of his solitude, and to be very easy.

When his clothes were worn out he made himself a coat

and a cap of goat skins, which he stitched together with little thongs of the same, that he cut with his knife.

He had no other needle but a nail

"Having some linen cloth by him, he sewed him some shirts with a nail and stitched them with the



■ The statue of Selkirk in Lower Largo.

Day	Wind	Course	Miles	Current	Current	Anchor	Wind	Sea
29	W.S.W.	to S.W.	10			At Cape Basil		
30	W.S.W.							
1	W.S.W.							
2	Calms							
3	W.S.W.							
4	W.S.W.							
5	W.S.W.							
6	S.W.							
7	W.S.W.							
8	W.							
9	S.W.							
10	W.S.W.							
11	W.S.W.							
12	W.S.W.							
13	W.S.W.							
14	W.S.W.							
15	W.S.W.							
16	S.W.							
17	W.S.W.							
18	W.S.W.							
19	S.W.							
20	W.S.W.							

■ Selkirk's death recorded in the Weymouth log by Captain Herdman.

worst of his old stockings. He had his last shirt on when we found him on the island."

It was a very different Alexander Selkirk who went home to visit his family in 1712. He had received a large share of booty and was dressed in gold-laced clothes when he sought them out on a Sunday morning as they worshipped in church.

No one recognised him at first – they thought he had died at sea – until his mother ran out of the congregation to greet him with a cry of joy.

But he could not settle again in Lower Largo (where there is now a statue of him on the house that replaced his birth-house). He missed his island and tried to recreate its

conditions in a bower or cave behind his father's house where he trained two cats to perform little tricks for him, as his island cats had done.

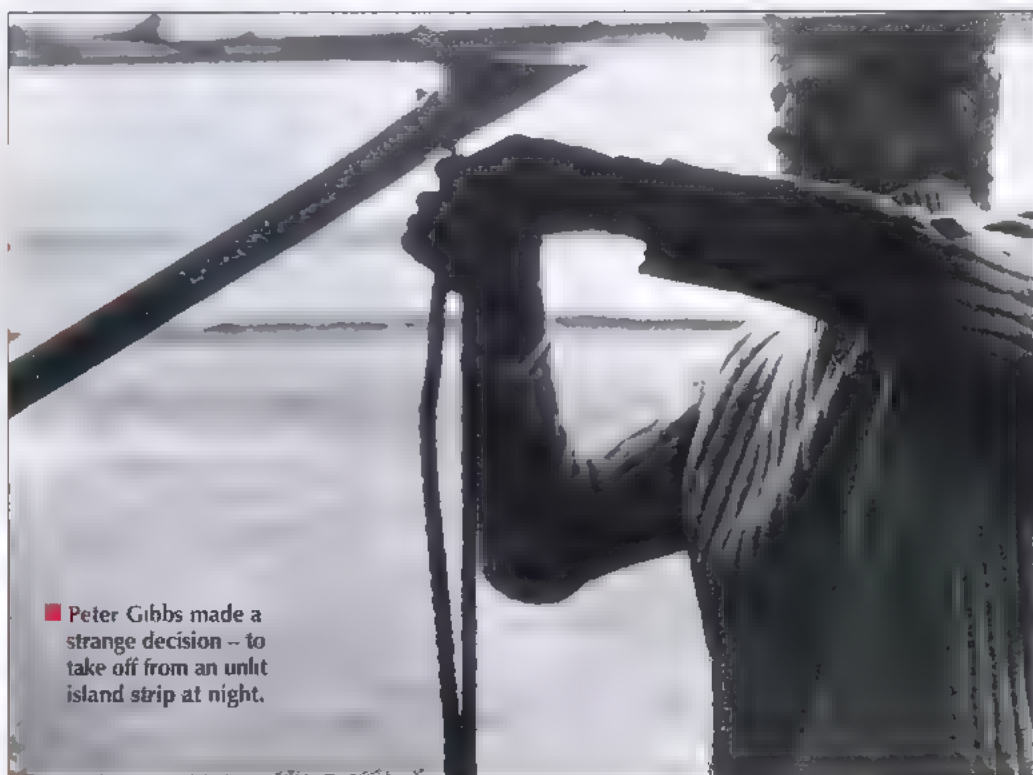
So he was pulled back to sea eventually as a Royal Navy lieutenant aboard His Majesty's ship Weymouth, bound for the coast of Guinea with a mission to subdue piracy. But there it encountered something a deal more vicious – yellow fever. It ran through the crew dealing out death after death. No fewer than 180 of the 280 on board succumbed.

And in his log book on December 13, 1721, Captain Mungo Herdman wrote: "pm. Alexander Selkirk deceased".

There was no further comment.

The flyer who took off into the dark

He was a one-time RAF Spitfire ace who seemed to know what he was doing, but the last flight of Peter Gibbs became a grimly perplexing puzzle as plane and pilot vanished over the island of Mull on Christmas Eve, 1975



■ Peter Gibbs made a strange decision – to take off from an unlit island strip at night.

On the east shore of the Sound of Mull, 10 miles south of Tobermory, is a half-mile-long grassy landing strip attached to the Norwegian-style Glenforsa Hotel and used by more prosperous guests with access to private aircraft.

One such guest, staying for a few days around Christmas 1975, was property manager Peter Gibbs – a darkly-handsome former Spitfire pilot, much younger-looking than his 54 years, separated from his wife, and still something of a flying adventurer. He could also boast high-flying achievement in the world of music, having been leader of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Though he was latterly based in Highbury, London, that harmonious experience had made him fond of Scotland, particularly of Mull, which he knew well after many previous visits. This time his 33-year-old friend, Dr Felicity Grainger, accompanied him on the visit by car. But there was no way such a man could be so near to an active landing strip without aching to fly. So when he heard that a Cessna 150 was for hire across the water at Oban's North Connel airport, he soon had it back at Glenforsa.

What the owner did not know was that Gibbs's flying licence had lapsed. Even more pertinent was that, on applying for renewal after a medical examination the previous May, he had been told to undergo a general flying test (which he had not yet

done) and advised to wear spectacles to correct near/distance vision when flying. In the light of this, the decision he took at 9pm on Christmas Eve seemed all the more incomprehensible.

Why should such an experienced pilot choose to don his flying gear at that time of night on Christmas Eve, a few hours before his 55th birthday, and walk out of the hotel with the stated intention of taking off into the darkness? Felicity Grainger, who was with the plane with him, later claimed he wanted to "stretch his legs" on the airstrip for night landing, believing that its night use inhibited its usefulness as the island's airstrip.

"It was just something he wanted to know," she said. Yet it did not take a pilot to realise that an attempt even by someone with perfect eyesight to try to land on an unlit strip like this in the dark would be perilous. Indeed, the hotel manager, Tim Howitt, advised Gibbs that such a flight was not wise and tried to discourage him. "He said he was not asking my permission," the hotelier recalled, "but letting me know his intentions as a courtesy."

Thus shrugging off the warning, Gibbs vanished into the night with Grainger and soon the Cessna's engine burst into life, as disbelieving guests watched its lights from the observation lounge looking across the Sound of Mull to the mainland.

Hotelier Howitt's brother David and his wife Pauline rushed out from their nearby chalet to look, astonished, through their binoculars. Both saw

strange lights around the plane's wings before it took off. These were later assumed to have come from two hand torches Grainger said she took with her to help guide Gibbs in. But the lights were alleged – by both onlookers – to have been "far too far apart" to be held by one person. Grainger later told an inquiry that Gibbs had not got out of the plane to help her, so this was another puzzling factor – was anyone else out there?

But that puzzle was quickly overwhelmed by the next one: whatever then happened to the plane and its pilot? David Howitt had walked down to within a few yards of the strip in time to see the silhouetted shape roaring past his head at about 100 feet. With its landing lights going on and off, he watched it as it climbed to about 800 feet.

When it turned on to an easterly heading, he assumed it was executing a normal circuit which involved turning back across the Sound, slipping briefly out of sight behind some coastal trees, and descending to approach the runway from the east. "This usually means a plane will reappear from behind the trees in about 15 seconds," said David Howitt, a journalist with aviation experience, including supervision of the hotel airstrip.

"But this plane did not reappear and, assuming Gibbs had another flight-plan in mind, I made my way back to our chalet. That was when I saw the light on the water of the Sound."

The light? "I assumed it was a flare, which

lasted perhaps 20 seconds before fading away. I then thought it possible that the plane had undershot the runway and crashed into the Sound."

But he preferred to believe the light had come from a passing trawler... and that the plane's pilot, deciding that a night landing here looked hazardous, had climbed well above the surrounding 3,000-ft mountains and headed for Glasgow or Prestwick airports with their night-landing facilities.

With growing unease, he then drove half a mile along the shore road, as near as possible to the point where he had seen the 'flare', and scanned the Sound water with his car's headlights - in vain. His unease turned to alarm as, just before 10 pm, sleet started to fall and he realised Gibbs then had no chance of returning to Glenforsa that night.

Back at the hotel, he found a shivering Felicity Grainger asking that no telephone check or alerting calls to the police be made until 10.30, by which time the plane could have landed elsewhere.

But the calls then made established it had not; and inside half an hour, the first two-man volunteer search party was moving out of the hotel, soon to become the busy HQ of a major search-and-rescue operation.

But although this grew into probably the biggest such hunt ever mobilised in Scotland, with police and rescue teams and RAF planes covering a 150-mile radius, it proved fruitless. Not the tiniest clue to the whereabouts of the plane or its pilot was found.

As one half of that first urgently-arranged search party on Christmas Eve - the other was local PC Alec MacLennan - David Howitt trekked, through hostile weather, up hundreds of feet of spongy, slippery hillside in the hope that if the crash had happened here, the pilot might still be alive.

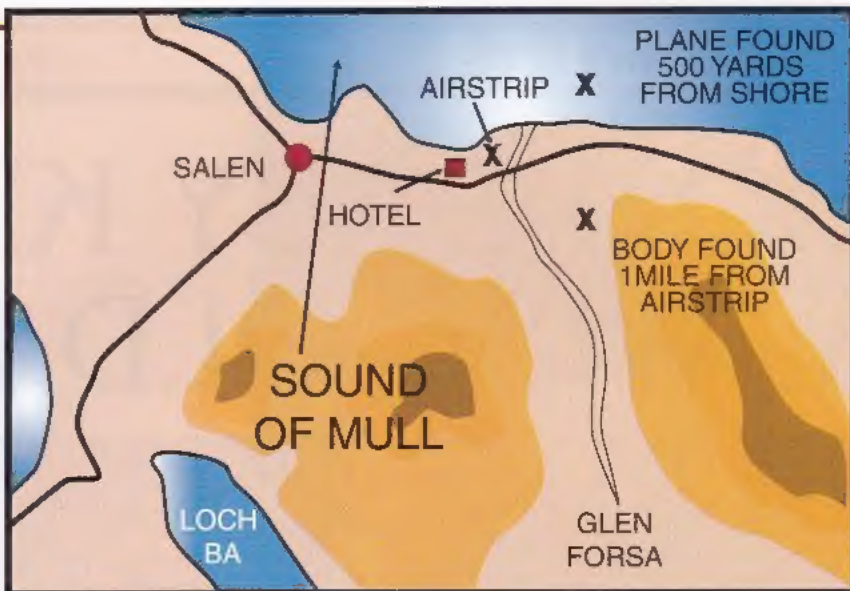
The two separated and searched through the trees and driving sleet with torches, looking for flames or a protruding wing. But Howitt later realised that, if he had known he was looking only for a man, things might have turned out differently.

For nearly four months later, when both men returned to the area on a spring-bright April morning - summoned to help officials identify a body found by shepherd Donald MacKinnon - he realised he could not have been more than 100 metres from that spot as he searched the hillside that fateful night. The body was lying backwards over the fallen trunk of a larch, 400 feet up the hill from the water of the Sound, and exactly a mile from the near-end of Glenforsa runway.

"Yes," said Howitt, as he gazed on the once-handsome features, "I'm certain that is Peter Gibbs."

Dental records later confirmed this. And Gibbs's clothes, though faded, were as Howitt remembered them - cord slacks, checked shirt, blue pullover, and flying-boots. Howitt was glad to turn back down the hill with the vaguely satisfying feeling that at least part of the mystery had been solved.

But he hadn't reached the road at the foot of



■ Plane and body were found far apart. How did it happen? Below left: the Cessna before the accident.

the hill before more questions began to nag. If Gibbs's body had been there for four months, on a spot regularly passed by a shepherd with dogs, why had it not been found before? The body's legs had been straddled around one of the larch's upgrowing branches, as if trapping it in a fall - why would Gibbs have been coming down the mountain? And, perhaps most pertinent of all, the question that was to remain tantalisingly unanswered for more than a decade - where was the plane?

If the position of Gibbs's body suggested he had been coming downhill, the logical conclusion was that he had crashed and abandoned the plane at a higher altitude. But as the machine was nowhere to be found on nearby land, it was assumed - briefly - that it must have plunged into one of two small fresh-water lochs within a few miles of the body's final position. This did not hold up, however, on two counts - the virtual impossibility of a shocked Gibbs covering so much difficult terrain to get to where he was found, and the shallowness of the lochs. A quick survey revealed there was no evidence in either of them.

So perhaps, realising he was in trouble, Gibbs had simply jumped out of the plane and allowed it to fly on by itself to crash into the Sound below? Felicity Grainger claimed this is what Gibbs had always said he would do in an emergency, but the absence of serious injury to his body established beyond reasonable doubt that this was not what had happened. And at the fatal accident inquiry held in Oban on June 24, 1976, the Board of Trade Accident Inspector William Cairns said it would have been "extremely difficult" for the pilot to open the plane's door in flight.

With these theories thus more or less dismissed, and the plane still missing, the only possibility seemed to be that Gibbs had indeed undershot the runway over the Sound, come down in the water, and escaped from the Cessna as it sank. This also became a highly-unlikely explanation, however,

after forensic tests revealed a complete lack of salt-water traces on his clothes, watch, and flying-boots.

But no fewer than 11 years after it took off, the little Cessna was indeed

found in the Sound - by diver

George Foster who, searching for scallops, went down to check out what had appeared as a 'lump'

on his echo sounder. Discerning a dark shape 100 feet down, 500 yards from the shore (and a mile and a half from the runway), he swam straight for it "and saw it was the body of a plane".

The wings had been parted from it and one was lying flat in the mud about 100 yards away. The propeller blade was bent back as if it had suffered some impact. "I didn't appreciate the significance of my discovery at the time," said Foster, recalling how, on peering inside the cockpit, he felt "oddly disappointed there wasn't a body or something". He also noticed that the windscreen was "completely out" and tried in vain to enter the cockpit through it. When he entered through one of the doors, all he found inside was "a large, sinister lobster".

But Foster's find established two facts - that the doors of the plane had been firmly shut on impact and that - despite lack of salt traces on his clothes - Gibbs must have scrambled out of the cockpit through the smashed windscreen. Minds would now have to be focused on yet another perplexing question. Why was the body on the hill?

It is not hard to imagine the desperate plight of Peter Gibbs in the Cessna's last airborne moments. Realising he was undershooting into the Sound, he would have employed all his flying experience to retrieve the situation and, failing, would have been shocked and charged with adrenalin - fighting to save himself as the machine smashed into the water.

He would have struggled through the windscreen as it parted company with the wings, thrust himself up and away, then swum desperately for the shore. And this for 25 minutes over a distance of some 500 yards, through bone-chilling water and driving sleet - appalling conditions that would have tested younger and stronger swimmers to the limit.

Yet, having survived to reach the shore, why would this shocked, exhausted middle-aged man then have crossed two nearby parallel roads - roads that would have led him back to the hotel's warmth in a few minutes - and opted to struggle up a hillside of slithery banks, muddy pitfalls and spiky trees and bushes for another 400 feet? Even further perhaps, considering the 'downhill' position of his body when found.

Medical experts have suggested that he might have been affected by a euphoric disorientation brought on by concussion, but it now seems hopelessly optimistic to expect that anyone will ever really know exactly what happened to Peter Gibbs, the flying adventurer, on his last great adventure. ●



FROM BABY KING TO A 'WISE OLD FOOL'



His people called him many names, including 'Son of Riccio'. But James VI did deserve the name of peacemaker, says biker historian David Ross

The little room where Mary, Queen of Scots gave birth to the future James VI – with some difficulty – can still be visited within Edinburgh Castle. Its small window stands high above Johnstone Terrace.

Apocryphal stories abound of a skeleton of a new-born child being found behind the room's wooden panelling, casting doubts on the legitimacy of James VI being the rightful king. Certainly at one point in James's career the people of Perth jeered him, naming him 'Son of Signeur Davie', as they believed his mother Mary's secretary, Riccio, was his father.

James was crowned at the age of 13 months in the Church of the Holy Rude at Stirling. This church stands at the 'top' of the town, near the castle. His mother had been crowned here 24 years before. The tower also has many bullet marks from a siege in 1651.

James was a strange character, by all accounts. He is variously described as being young and old at the same time, or as 'the wisest fool in Christendom'. He shambled like a halfwit, yet had an education of great depth, courtesy of the brilliant but demanding scholar, George Buchanan.

One small mistake and Buchanan would thrash the young James. In the middle of one of these beatings, a lady entered the room and berated Buchanan for handing out such heavy punishment on his monarch. Buchanan replied: "I have whipped his arse, madam. You may kiss it if you wish!"

For all his learning, James was highly superstitious, witchcraft being one of his peculiar horrors. A story was brought to him of the actions of witches at a church in North Berwick, and an infamous witch trial ensued. The story goes that 94 witches and six wizards conjured up Satan himself, whereupon they opened up the graves and shared out among themselves the fingers and toes of the incumbents.

The scant remains of this church still stand in North Berwick, by the



■ The Edinburgh Castle room where Mary, Queen of Scots gave birth to James VI.

harbour. It once stood on an islet joined to the shore by arches, but the land has been reclaimed.

James was an odd individual to be responsible for the Bible as we know it today. He translated it from the original manuscripts, and that's why, on opening almost any Bible today, you will see it states 'King James Version' on the flyleaf.

After all is said and done, however, Scotland went through a period of peace during James's reign, that it had never seen before. He had a horror of bloodshed, and in most difficult political situations he would try to take the middle ground.

Trade thrived under James VI's kingship, and we can only speculate on the advancement that was possible if

he had not kept a constant eye on the South, waiting for the death of Queen Elizabeth of England and his right of succession towards her throne.

The very last act James performed as King of Scots was to command a bridge to be built, and this bridge stands to this day. As he crossed the Tweed at Berwick on his journey south, the King found it to be a 'shoogly' old structure, and this terrified him so much that he immediately instructed the powers-that-be that a new stone bridge must be built at once.

It stands on 15 arches, and is 1,164 feet in length. Perhaps it is fitting that the monarch who ruled over two kingdoms should also have united them by a stone bridge in the passing. ●

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Illustrations:

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**FIRST PRESS
PUBLISHING**

DAILY RECORD AND SUNDAY MAIL MAGAZINE DIVISION

40 Anderston Quay, Glasgow G3 8DA

Tel: 0141 242 1400

Editor-in-Chief Iain King

Senior editor Austin Barrett

Consultant Hugh Currie

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Suzie Cairns Tel: 0141 242 1444

Circulation Manager Rita Nimmo

Production Manager Helen Sullivan

Financial Controller Jonathan Platt

Scotland's Story is published in 52 weekly parts by First Press Publishing, the magazine and book publishing division of the Scottish Daily Record & Sunday Mail Limited.

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SCOTLAND'S STORY

NEXT WEEK IN PART 22



CHARLES AND THE COVENANT

Charles I was a small, shy man but he had a stubborn streak and was not prepared to compromise. It was a fault that would cost him dear when he tried to force changes on the Church of Scotland. For the Covenanters were prepared to back their grievances with steel.

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